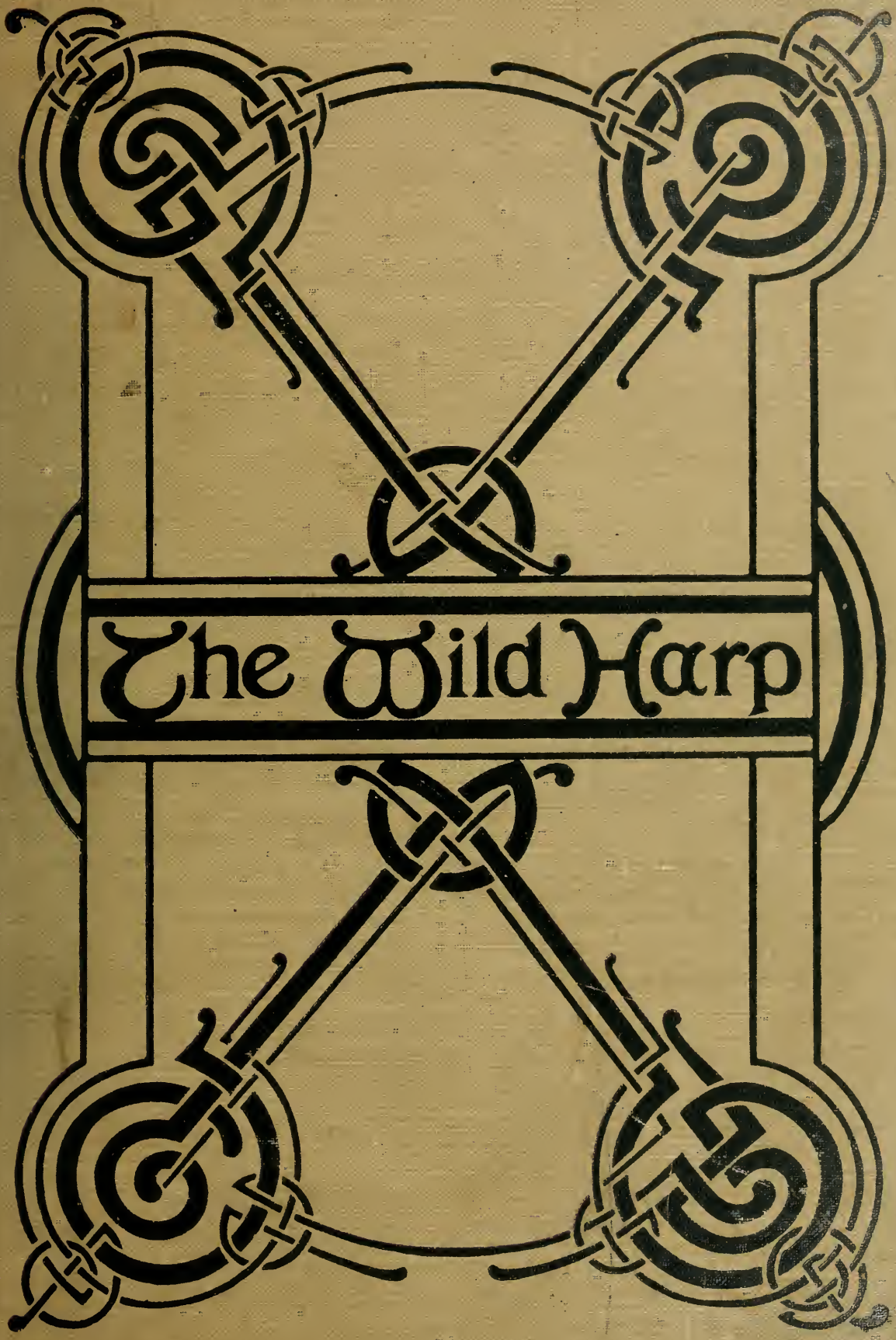
The Wild Harp

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
AT LOS ANGELES

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THE WILD HARP

A SELECTION FROM IRISH LYRICAL POETRY

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The Irish Harp has
three strings
One of Love and
the Joy of Battle
One of Sorrow and
Death
The third–of Sleep-
ing and Dreaming-
is sweetest

The Wild Harp

a Selection from Irish Poetry by Katharine Tynan

With decorations by C.M. Watts

London
Sidgwick & Jackson Ltd.
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TO
LADY GLENCONNER
FOR
TRAVELLER'S JOY

JUN 17 1942 LIBRARY SETS

INTRODUCTORY

THE WILD HARP is not intended to be at all representative of Irish poetry generally. Its intention is to capture for English ears, sensitive to a wild music, just such strains as might be sounded by the strings of a harp—something thin, strange, forlorn, something a little unearthly and exquisite, else there would be no reason to garner it. This intention excludes a good deal. It shuts out the whole body of humorous poetry, of which Ireland has produced much, and very deft and delightful it is. It shuts out reflective poetry, unless the reflection is brief and shining. It bars propagandist poetry altogether. The harp does not laugh, it does not think, it does not teach. The Irish harp had three strings, the old poets said long ago. The first string sang of youth, love, and the joy of battle ; the second of grief and death; the third of forgetting and sleep—and the third was the sweetest string of all. The

scheme of the little book—if one may talk of a scheme about a thing so slight—forbids all long poems. This did not prove a self-denying ordinance except in some few cases, such as Ferguson's "Vengeance of the Welshmen of Tirawley," one of the wildest ballads in the English tongue, and Aubrey De Vere's "The Bard Ethell," a poem of beautiful simplicities. Simple things and wild things I have sought to gather together, and almost inevitably they had to be brief, lyrical snatches, expressions of emotion, something too sharply felt not to be expressed simply. Again, I have excluded nearly all poetry which shows a derivation from English influences—although I have not always been able to resist an exquisite artificiality. So much by way of apologia.

I have tried also to present the English reader with something he will not know already. This involves the laying aside sometimes of the poems of a poet which the judgment of Time has selected, and giving, perhaps, his or her second-best.

x

I once knew an anthologist who had the uninspired idea—from the true collector's point of view—of presenting an anthology to be called "The Poets' Parnassus," which should contain only the poems which occurred oftenest in the anthologies—the picked few in fact. Doubtless the book would have proved a good seller, but it must have been a dull task in the making.

Any anthologist must take some things about which there can be no question—as, for example, Mangan's "Dark Rosaleen"; but beyond that unalterable necessity the true anthologist will rejoice in his own discoveries, his own delights.

Here and there I have shortened a little. The nineteenth century was a leisured age with Irish poets. They were apt to say all they had to say in an incredible number of volumes, and leave Time to do the sifting if Time thought it worth while. In the case of some of the lengthiest, such as Aubrey de Vere, Time will think it very well worth while. Over the work of others, laurelled

as lately as the 'eighties, Time has already flung his dust and ashes, as he has done and is doing over various belauded English poets of the same and even later date.

This brings me to the extraordinary birth and growth of an Anglo-Irish poetry within the last twenty-five years or so. The Ireland of my young days was terribly unexacting in the matter of poetry. We were docile—the Irish will always "follow-my-leader" up to a point—and being bidden to admire rhetoric and clap-trap by our elders, and presumably our betters, we obeyed. I myself, at an early age, was figuratively stood in the corner by a sympathetic and not at all conventional father because I confessed to a doubt about the poetry of Moore; and I might really much better have admired Moore than the great mass of rhetorical poetry produced by the "Nation" poets and the poets of Fenianism, on which I was nurtured.

Of course there was always Mangan and Ferguson, Callanan and Edward Walsh, and the

best of De Vere; but these were dead or old, and Ireland was placidly accepting for poetry what was merely propagandism or heartless exercises in unsimple simplicity. These were the things we young ones were reproducing with great satisfaction up to the time when W. B. Yeats brought a new soul into Irish poetry. His fruits are shown to-day in the work of such essential poets as "A. E." and James Stephens, Seumas O'Sullivan and Padraic Colum, Joseph Campbell and Alice Milligan.

Not that any of these derive from W. B. Yeats. They would say the time had come; and in the case of all these poets, each working on his or her own lines, it would be absurd to ascribe their derivation to any man. It is safe to say that no man, but only the Spirit could have made George Russell or James Stephens — or the others, for the matter of that. What I would claim for Mr. Yeats is that he established, or at least re-established, the artistic conscience and the artistic ideal in Irish poetry. That

those to whom he taught the first lessons, the passion for mere perfection, could very soon do without him does not push him from his place Whether he has done Irish poetry and Irish literature a service by directing it towards the drama remains to be seen. The Irish naturally prefer to be heard rather than overheard ; they are a dramatic people and they crave the direct appeal and answer of eye to eye and ear to ear. But, like other things in this world, perhaps the thing they desire is not always best for them. Perhaps the patient craftsmanship out of sight and hearing of the world might produce finer things than the myriad plays which are being rained on the various theatres of Ireland, off-shoots, rebellious often, of the Abbey Theatre. Perhaps the Irish, of all people, need most the discipline they like least. Mr. Yeats has done Ireland and mankind a great disservice, at all events, in that he himself has all but given up the writing of poetry for the writing of drama.

And now, having claimed for the Wild Harp that it is brief and direct, I ask pardon for an introduction over-long and possibly tedious, which my readers may, if they will, sweep into the region of unconsidered things.

KATHARINE TYNAN

THE thanks of the compiler are due and are hereby rendered to Messrs. Maunsel for the various poems taken from the books published by them of Mrs. Campbell, Miss Alice Milligan, and Miss Eva Gore-Booth; of James Stephens, Padraic Colum, Seumas O'Sullivan, and Joseph Campbell; and to all those authors, my friends, who were so eager to help me. My thanks are also due to Dr. Douglas Hyde for his two poems; to Mr. W. H. Chesson, and associated with him Messrs. Alston Rivers and Mr. Alexander Moring, for the permissions for Mrs. Chesson's poems; to Mr. W. B. Yeats, and with him Mr. A. H. Bullen, for Mr. Yeats's poems; to Mrs. Allingham for the three poems by her husband; to "Moira O'Neill," and with her Messrs. Blackwood, for the two poems by "Moira O'Neill"; to Miss Emily Lawless for the use of her poems; to Mr. Herbert Trench a similar thanksgiving; the like to Mr. Henry de Vere Stacpoole for "The Lost Children"; to Mr. George Russell for a free permission for his

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K. T. H.

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DARK ROSALEEN

James Clarence Mangan

O MY Dark Rosaleen,
  Do not sigh, do not weep !
The priests are on the ocean green,
  They march along the deep.
There's wine from the royal Pope
  Upon the ocean green ;
And Spanish ale shall give you hope,
  My Dark Rosaleen !
  My own Rosaleen !
Shall glad your heart, shall give you hope,
Shall give you health, and help, and hope,
  My Dark Rosaleen !

Over hills and through dales
  Have I roamed for your sake ;
All yesterday I sailed with sails
  On river and on lake.
The Erne, at its highest flood,
  I dashed across unseen,
For there was lightning in my blood,
  My Dark Rosaleen !
  My own Rosaleen !
O ! there was lightning in my blood,
Red lightning lightened through my blood,
  My Dark Rosaleen !

All day long, in unrest,
  To and fro do I move,
The very soul within my breast
  Is wasted for you, love !
The heart in my bosom faints
  To think of you, my Queen,
My life of life, my saint of saints,
  My Dark Rosaleen !
  My own Rosaleen !
To hear your sweet and sad complaints,
My life, my love, my saint of saints,
  My Dark Rosaleen !

Woe and pain, pain and woe,
  Are my lot night and noon,
To see your bright face clouded so,
  Like to the mournful moon.
And yet will I rear your throne
  Again in golden sheen ;
'Tis you shall reign, shall reign alone,
  My Dark Rosaleen !
  My own Rosaleen !
'Tis you shall have the golden throne,
'Tis you shall reign, and reign alone,
  My Dark Rosaleen !

Over dews, over sands,
  Will I fly for your weal :
Your holy, delicate white hands
  Shall girdle me with steel.
At home in your emerald bowers,
  From morning's dawn till e'en,
You'll pray for me, my flower of flowers,
  My Dark Rosaleen !
  My fond Rosaleen !
You'll think of me through daylight's
    hours,
My virgin flower, my flower of flowers,
  My Dark Rosaleen ?

I could scale the blue air,
  I could plough the high hills,
O, I could kneel all night in prayer,
  To heal your many ills !
And one beamy smile from you
  Would float like light between
My toils and me, my own, my true,
  My Dark Rosaleen !
  My fond Rosaleen !
Would give me life and soul anew,
A second life, a soul anew,
  My Dark Rosaleen !

O, the Erne shall run red
  With redundance of blood,
The earth shall rock beneath our tread,
  And flames wrap hill and wood,
And gun-peal and slogan-cry
  Wake many a glen serene,
Ere you shall fade, ere you shall die,
  My Dark Rosaleen !
  My own Rosaleen !
The Judgment Hour must first be nigh,
Ere you can fade, ere you can die,
  My Dark Rosaleen !

THE COUNTY OF MAYO

From the Irish. George Fox

ON the deck of Patrick Lynch's boat I sit in woeful plight,
Through my sighing all the weary day and weeping all the night,
Were it not that full of sorrow from my people forth I go,
By the blessed sun, 'tis royally I'd sing thy praise, Mayo !

When I dwelt at home in plenty, and my gold did much abound,
In the company of fair young maids the Spanish ale went round.
'Tis a bitter change from those gay days that now I'm forced to go,
And must leave my bones in Santa Cruz, far from my own Mayo.

They are altered girls in Irrul now ; 'tis proud they're grown and high,
With their hair-bags and their top-knots—for I pass their buckles by ;
But it's little now I heed their airs, for God will have it so,
That I must depart for foreign lands and leave my sweet Mayo.

'Tis my grief that Patrick Loughlin is not
Earl in Irrul still,
And that Brian Duff no longer rules as
Lord upon the hill :
And that Colonel Hugh MacGrady should be
lying dead and low,
And I sailing, sailing swiftly from the county
of Mayo.

SHULE AROON

I WISH I were on yonder hill,
'Tis there I'd sit and cry my fill,
Till every tear would turn a mill,
Is go dé tu mavourneen slaun !

I'll sell my rock, I'll sell my reel,
I'll sell my only spinning-wheel,
To buy for my love a sword of steel,
Is go dé tu mavourneen slaun !

I'll dye my petticoats, I'll dye them red,
And round the world I'll beg my bread,
Until my parents shall wish me dead,
Is go dé tu mavourneen slaun !

I wish, I wish, I wish in vain,
I wish I had my heart again,
And vainly think I'd not complain,
Is go dé tu mavourneen slaun !

But now my love has gone to France,
To try his fortunes to advance ;
If he e'er come back 'tis but a chance,
Is go dé tu mavourneen slaun !

SAVOURNEEN DEELISH

AH! the moment was sad when my love and I parted,
Savourneen deelish, Eileen Oge!
As I kissed off her tears, I was nigh broken-hearted,
Savourneen deelish, Eileen Oge!
Wan was her cheek when she hung on my shoulder,
Damp was her hand, no marble was colder,
I felt that I never again should behold her,
Savourneen deelish, Eileen Oge!

When the word of command put our men into motion,
Savourneen deelish, Eileen Oge!
I buckled on my knapsack to cross the wide ocean,
Savourneen deelish, Eileen Oge!
Brisk were our troops—all roaring like thunder,
Pleased with the voyage, impatient for plunder,
My bosom with grief well-nigh torn was asunder,
Savourneen deelish, Eileen Oge!

Long I fought for my country, far, far from
my true love,
Savourneen deelish, Eileen Oge !
All my pay and my booty I hoarded for you,
love,
Savourneen deelish, Eileen Oge !
Peace was proclaimed : escaped from the
slaughter,
Landed at home, my sweet girl I sought her ;
But sorrow, alas ! to the cold grave had
brought her,
Savourneen deelish, Eileen Oge !

CEAN DUBH DEELISH*

From the Irish. Sir Samuel Ferguson

PUT your head, darling, darling, darling,
Your darling black head my heart above ;
Oh, mouth of honey, with the thyme for fragrance,
Who with heart in breast could deny you love ?

Oh, many and many a young girl for me is pining,
Letting her locks of gold to the cold wind free,
For me, the foremost of our gay young fellows ;
But I'd leave a hundred, pure love, for thee !

Then put your head, darling, darling, darling,
Your darling black head my heart above ;
Oh, mouth of honey, with the thyme for fragrance,
Who with heart in breast could deny you love ?

* Dear black head.

THE FAIR HILLS OF IRELAND

From the Irish. Sir Samuel Ferguson

A PLENTEOUS place is Ireland for hospitable cheer,
Uileacán dubh O ! *
Where the wholesome fruit is bursting from the yellow barley ear ;
Uileacán dubh O !
There is honey in the trees where her misty vales expand,
And her forest paths in summer are by falling waters fanned ;
There is dew at high noontide there and springs i' the yellow sand,
On the fair hills of holy Ireland.

Curled he is and ringleted and plaited to the knee,
Uileacán dubh O !
Each captain who comes sailing across the Irish sea ;
Uileacán dubh O !
And I will make my journey if life and health but stand,

* O black lamentation !

Unto that pleasant country, that fresh and fragrant strand,
And leave your boasted braveries, your wealth and high command,
For the fair hills of holy Ireland.

Large and profitable are the stacks upon the ground,
Uileacán dubh O !
The butter and the cream do wondrously abound,
Uileacán dubh O !
The cresses on the water and the sorrels are at hand,
And the cuckoo's calling daily his note of music bland,
And the bold thrush sings so bravely his song i' the forests grand,
On the fair hills of holy Ireland.

MOLLY, MY DEAR

The Hon. George Ogle

AS down by Banna's banks I strayed
One evening in May,
The little birds in blithest notes
Made vocal every spray ;
They sung their little notes of love,
They sung them o'er and o'er.
O gra machree, ma colleen oge, ma Molly asthore.

I laid me down upon a bank,
Bewailing my sad fate,
That doomed me thus the slave of love
And cruel Molly's hate ;
How can she break the honest heart
That wears her in its core ?
O gra machree, ma colleen oge, ma Molly asthore.

Oh ! had I all the flocks that graze
On yonder yellow hill,
Or lowed for me the numerous herds
That yon green pasture fill—
With her I love I'd gladly share
My kine and fleecy store.
O gra machree, ma colleen oge, ma Molly asthore.

Two turtle-doves above my head
  Sat courting on a bough ;
I envied them their happiness,
  To see them bill and coo.
Such fondness once for me was shown,
  But now, alas ! 'tis o'er.
O gra machree, ma colleen oge, ma Molly
    asthore.

KATHLEEN O'MORE

George Nugent Reynolds

MY love, still I think that I see her once more,
But, alas! she has left me her loss to deplore—
My own little Kathleen, my poor little Kathleen,
My Kathleen O'More!

Her hair glossy black, her eyes were dark blue,
Her colour still changing, her smiles ever new—
So pretty was Kathleen, my sweet little Kathleen,
My Kathleen O'More!

She milked the dun cow that ne'er offered to stir;
Though wicked to all it was gentle to her—
So kind was my Kathleen, my poor little Kathleen,
My Kathleen O'More!

She sat at the door one cold afternoon
To hear the wind blow and to gaze on the moon,—
So pensive was Kathleen, my poor little Kathleen,
My Kathleen O'More !

Cold was the night-breeze that sighed round her bower,
It chilled my poor Kathleen, she drooped from that hour,
And I lost my poor Kathleen, my own little Kathleen,
My Kathleen O'More !

The bird of all birds that I love the best
Is the robin that in the churchyard builds his nest ;
For he seems to watch Kathleen, hops lightly o'er Kathleen,
My Kathleen O'More !

PASTHEEN FINN

From the Irish. Sir Samuel Ferguson

OH, my fair Pastheen is my heart's delight,
Her gay heart laughs in her blue eye bright,
Like the apple blossom her bosom white
And her neck like the swan's on a March morn bright!
Then, Oro, come with me, come with me, come with me!
Oro, come with me, brown girl sweet!
And oh! I would go through snow and sleet,
If you would come with me, brown girl sweet!

Love of my heart, my fair Pastheen!
Her cheeks are as red as the rose's sheen,
But my lips have tasted no more, I ween,
Than the glass I drank to the health of my queen!
Then, Oro, come with me, come with me, come with me!
Oro, come with me, brown girl sweet!

And oh ! I would go through snow and sleet,
If you would come with me, brown girl sweet !

Were I in the town where's mirth and glee,
Or 'twixt two barrels of barley bree,
With my fair Pastheen upon my knee,
'Tis I would drink to her pleasantly !
Then, Oro, come with me, come with me, come with me !
Oro, come with me, brown girl sweet !
And oh ! I would go through snow and sleet,
If you would come with me, brown girl sweet !

Nine nights I lay in longing and pain,
Betwixt two bushes, beneath the rain,
Thinking to see you, love, once again.
But whistle and call were all in vain !
Then, Oro, come with me, come with me, come with me !
Oro come with me, brown girl sweet !
And oh ! I would go through snow and sleet,
If you would come with me, brown girl sweet !

I'll leave my people, both friend and foe ;
From all the girls in the world I'll go ;
But from you, sweetheart, never ! ah no !
Till I lie in the coffin stretched cold and low !
Then, Oro, come with me, come with me, come with me !
Oro, come with me, brown girl sweet !
And oh ! I would go through snow and sleet,
If you would come with me, brown girl sweet !

DIRGE OF O'SULLIVAN BEARE

From the Irish. *Jeremiah Joseph Callanan*

THE sun on Ivera
No longer shines brightly ;
The voice of her music
No longer is sprightly ;
No more to her maidens
The light dance is dear,
Since the death of our darling
O'Sullivan Beare.

Had he died calmly,
I would not deplore him ;
Or if the wild strife
Of the sea-war closed o'er him :
But with ropes round his white limbs
Through ocean to trail him,
Like a fish after slaughter—
'Tis therefore I wail him.

Long may the curse
Of his people pursue them ;
Scully, that sold him,
And soldier that slew him !

One glimpse of heaven's light
  May they see never !
May the hearthstone of hell
  Be their best bed for ever !

Dear head of my darling,
  How gory and pale,
These agèd eyes see thee,
  High-spiked on their gaol !
That cheek in the summer sun
  Ne'er shall grow warm,
Nor that eye shall catch light,
  But the flash of the storm.

A curse, blessèd ocean,
  Is on thy green water,
From the haven of Cork
  To Ivera of slaughter :
Since thy billows were dyed
  With the red wounds of fear
Of our darling, our chieftain,
  O'Sullivan Beare !

AT THE MID HOUR OF NIGHT

Thomas Moore

AT the mid hour of night when stars are weeping I fly
To the lone vale we loved when life shone warm in thine eye ;
And I think oft if spirits can steal from the regions of air
To revisit past scenes of delight, thou wilt come to me there,
And tell me our love is remembered, even in the sky.

Then I sing the wild song it was once such rapture to hear !
When our voices commingling breathed like one on the ear ;
And, as Echo far off through the vale my sad orison rolls,
I think, O my love ! 'tis thy voice from the Kingdom of Souls,
Faintly answering still the notes that once were so dear.

RINGLETED YOUTH OF MY LOVE

From the Irish. Douglas Hyde

RINGLETED youth of my love,
With thy locks bound loosely behind thee,
You passed by the road above,
But you never came in to find me ;
Where was the harm for you
If you came for a little to see me ?
Your kiss is a wakening dew
Were I ever so ill or so dreamy.

If I had golden store
I would make a nice little boreen,
To lead straight up to his door,
The door of the house of my stóreen ;
Hoping to God not to miss
The sound of his footfall in it,
I have waited so long for his kiss
That for days I have slept not a minute.

I thought, O my love ! you were so
As the moon is or sun on a fountain,
And I thought after that you were snow,
The cold snow on the top of the mountain ;

And I thought after that you were more
Like God's lamp shining to find me,
Or the bright star of knowledge before
And the star of knowledge behind me.

You promised me high-heeled shoes,
And satin and silk, my stóreen,
And to follow me, never to lose,
Though the ocean were round us roaring ;
Like a bush in a gap in a wall
I am now left lonely without thee,
And this house I grow dead of is all
That I see around or about me.

THE COOLUN*

From the Irish. Sir Samuel Ferguson

OH, have you seen the Coolun
  Walking down by the cuckoo's street,
With the dew of the meadow shining
  On her milk-white, twinkling feet?
O my love she is and my colleen oge
  And she dwells in Balnagar;
And she bears the palm of beauty bright
  From the fairest that in Erin are.

In Balnagar is the Coolun.
  Like the berry on the bough her cheek;
Bright beauty dwells for ever
  On her fair neck and ringlets sleek.
O sweeter is her mouth's soft music
  Than the lark or thrush at dawn,
Or the blackbird in the greenwood singing
  Farewell to the setting sun.

Rise up, my boy, make ready,
  To horse, for I forth would ride
To follow the modest damsel
  Where she walks on the green hill-side;

* The long, beautiful hair.

For ever since our youth were we plighted
  In faith, truth and wedlock true.
O sweeter her voice is nine times over
  Than organ or cuckoo !

And ever since my childhood
  I've loved the fair and darling child ;
But our people came between us,
  And with lucre our pure love defiled.
Oh, my woe it is and my bitter pain,
  And I weep it night and day
That the colleen bawn of my early love
  Is torn from my heart away.

THE OUTLAW OF LOCH LENE

From the Irish. Jeremiah Joseph Callanan

OH, many a day have I made good ale in the glen,
That came not of stream or malt—like the brewing of men.
My bed was the ground ; my roof, the greenwood above,
And the wealth that I sought one far kind glance from my Love.

Alas ! on that night when the horses I drove from the field,
That I was not near from terror my angel to shield.
She stretched forth her arms—her mantle she flung to the wind,
And swam o'er Loch Lene her outlawed lover to find.

Oh would that a freezing, sleet-winged tempest did sweep,
And I and my love were alone, far off on the deep !

I'd ask not a ship, nor a bark, nor a pinnace
to save,—
With her hand on my neck I'd fear not the
wind or the wave.

'Tis down by the lake where the wild-tree
fringes its sides
The maid of my heart, my fair one of
Heaven, abides.
I think as at eve she wanders its mazes along,
The birds go to sleep by the sweet, wild
twist of her song.

SERENADE

George Darley

SWEET in her green cell the Flower of Beauty slumbers,
Lulled by the faint breezes sighing through her hair ;
Sleeps she and hears not the melancholy numbers
Breathed to my sad lute mid the lonely air ?

Down from the high cliffs the rivulet is teeming,
To wind round the willow banks that lure him from above :
Oh, that in tears from my rocky prison streaming,
I too could glide to the bower of my love !

Ah ! where the woodbines with sleepy arms have bound her,
Opes she her eyelids at the dream of my lay,
Listening like the dove, while the fountains echo round her,
To her lost mate's call in the forests far away ?

Come, then, my Bird !—for the peace thou
ever bearest,
Still heaven's messenger of comfort to me,
Come !—this fond bosom, my faithfullest,
my fairest !
Bleeds with its death-wound, its wound of
love for thee.

THE LAPFUL OF NUTS

Sir Samuel Ferguson

WHENE'ER I see soft hazel eyes
And nut-brown curls,
I think of those bright days I spent
Among the Limerick girls ;
When up through Cratla woods I went
Nutting with thee,
And we plucked the glossy clustering fruit
From many a bending tree.

Beneath the hazel boughs we sat,
Thou, love, and I,
And the gathered nuts lay in thy lap,
Beneath thy downcast eye ;
But little we thought of the store we'd won,
I, love, or thou ;
For our hearts were full, and we dared not own
The love that's spoken now.

Oh, there's wars for willing hearts in Spain,
And high Germanie !
And I'll come back, ere long, again
With knightly fame and fee :
And I'll come back, if I ever come back,
Faithful to thee,
That sat with thy white lap full of nuts,
Beneath the hazel tree.

THE SONG OF RED HANRAHAN

William Butler Yeats

THE old brown thorn trees break in two high over Cummen Strand
Under a bitter black wind that blows from the left hand,
Our courage breaks like an old tree in a black wind and dies ;
But we have hidden in our hearts the flame out of the eyes
Of Cathaleen the daughter of Houlihan.

The wind has bundled up the clouds high over Knocknarea
And thrown the thunder on the stones for all that Maeve can say.
Angers that are like noisy clouds have set our hearts abeat ;
But we have all bent low and low and kissed the quiet feet
Of Cathaleen the daughter of Houlihan.

The yellow pool has overflowed high up on Clooth-na-Bare,
For the wet winds are blowing out of the clinging air ;

Like heavy flooded waters our bodies and
  our blood ;
But purer than a tall candle before the Holy
  Rood
Is Cathaleen the daughter of Houlihan.

THE SHORT CUT TO ROSSES

Nora Chesson

BY the short cut to Rosses a fairy girl I met ;
I was taken in her beauty as a fish is in a net.
The fern uncurled to look at her, so very fair was she,
With her hair as bright as seaweed new-drawn from out the sea.

By the short cut to Rosses ('twas on the first of May)
I heard the fairies piping, and they piped my heart away ;
They piped till I was mad with joy, but when I was alone
I found my heart was piped away and in my breast a stone.

By the short cut to Rosses 'tis I'll go never-more,
Lest I be robbed of soul by her that stole my heart before,
Lest she take my soul and crush it like a dead leaf in her hand,
For the short cut to Rosses is the way to Fairyland.

THE FAIR-HAIRED GIRL

From the Irish. Sir Samuel Ferguson

THE sun has set, the stars are still,
The red moon hides behind the hill;
The tide has left the brown beach bare,
The birds have fled the upper air;
Upon her branch the lone cuckoo
Is chanting still her sad adieu;
And you, my fair-haired girl, must go
Across the salt sea under woe!

I through love have learned three things:
Sorrow, sin and death it brings;
Yet day by day my heart within
Dares shame and sorrow, death and sin.
Maiden, you have aimed the dart
Rankling in my ruined heart:
Maiden, may the God above
Grant you grace to grant me love!

Sweeter than the viol's string
And the notes that blackbirds sing;
Brighter than the dewdrops rare
Is the maiden wondrous fair:
Like the silver swans at play
Is her neck as bright as day!
Woe is me that e'er my sight
Dwelt on charms so deadly bright!

OH SAY, MY BROWN DRIMIN*

Jeremiah Joseph Callanan

OH say, my brown Drimin, thou Silk of the Kine,*
Where, where are thy strong ones, last hope of thy line ?
Too deep and too long is the slumber they take,
At the loud call of freedom why don't they awake ?

My strong ones have fallen from the bright eye of day
All darkly they sleep in their dwelling of clay ;
The cold turf is o'er them—they hear not my cries,
And since Louis has left me I cannot arise.

Oh ! where art thou, Louis ? our eyes are on thee—
Are thy lofty ships walking in strength o'er the sea ?

* Names under which Ireland was sung by the Jacobite poets. Drimin, a name of endearment for a cow.

In freedom's last strife shouldst thou linger
or quail,
No morn e'er shall break on the night of the
Gael.

But should the King's son, now bereft of his
right,
Come proud in his beauty for his country to
fight,
Like leaves on the trees will my people arise,
And deep from their mountains shout back
to my cries.

NORA OF THE AMBER HAIR

From the Irish. Sir Samuel Ferguson

O NORA, amber-coolun,
It robs me of my rest,
That my head should be forbidden
To lie upon your breast !
It robs me of my rest, Love,
And it breaks my heart and brain ;
And oh ! that I could bear my dear
Across the raging main !

Oh, valentine and sweetheart !
Be true to what you swore
When you promised me you'd marry me
Without a farthing's store ;
Oh, we'd walk the dew together,
And light our steps should be ;
And Nora, amber-coolun,
I'd kiss you daintily.

Hard by the holm
Lives this white love of mine ;
Her thick hair's like amber,
Which causes me to pine.
King of the Sabbath,
Oh, grant me soon to see
My own fat cattle grazing
Around sweet Ballybuy !

CASHEL OF MUNSTER

From the Irish. Edward Walsh

I WOULD wed you, dear, without gold or gear or counted kine,
My wealth you'd be, would your friends agree and you be mine.
My grief, my gloom, that you do not come, my heart's dear hoard,
To Cashel fair though our couch were there but a hard deal board.

O come, my bride, o'er the wild hill-side to the valley low !
A downy bed for my love I'll spread where waters flow :
And we shall stray where streamlets play the groves among,
Where echo tells to the listening dells the blackbird's song.

Love tender, true, I gave to you and secret sighs,
In hope to see upon you and me one hour arise,
When the priest's blest voice would bind my choice and the ring's strict tie.
If wife you be, love, to one but me, love, in grief I'll die !

A neck of white has my heart's delight and
breast like snow,
And flowing hair whose ringlets fair to the
green grass flow.
Alas ! that I did not early die, before the day
That saw me here, from my bosom's dear,
far, far away !

MOLLY ASTHORE

Sir Samuel Ferguson

OH, Mary dear, oh, Mary fair,
O branch of generous stem,
White blossom of the banks of Nair,
Though lilies grow on them !
You've left me sick at heart for love ;
So faint I cannot see ;
The candle swims the board above ;
I'm drunk for love of thee.
O stately stem of maiden pride,
My woe it is and pain,
That I, thus severed from thy side,
The long night must remain !

Through all the towns of Inisfail
I've wandered far and wide ;
But from Downpatrick to Kinsale,
From Carlow to Kilbride,
'Mong lords and dames of high degree,
Where'er my feet have gone,
My Mary, one to equal thee
I've never looked upon ;
I live in darkness and in doubt
Whene'er my love's away.
But were the blessed sun put out
Her shadow would make day.

'Tis she indeed, young bud of bliss,
  And gentle as she's fair,
Though lily-white her bosom is,
  And sunny bright her hair,
And dewy-azure her blue eye,
  And rosy-red her cheek ;
Yet brighter she in modesty,
  More beautifully meek.
The world's wise men from North to South
  Can never cure my pain ;
But one kiss from her honey mouth
  Would make me whole again !

FAIRY MARY BARRY

From the Irish. Dr. George Sigerson

OH, Fairy Mary Barry, I tarry down-hearted ;
Unknown to friend or kin, health and wealth have departed ;
When I'm going to my bed or I wake in the morning
My thought is still of you and your cruel, cruel scorning.

Oh, Fairy Mary Barry, take counsel, my bright Love,
And send away the stranger from out of your sight, Love,
With all his fine airs, but there's more truth in me, Love,
And come to me, machree, since our parents agree, Love.

I thought I could coax you with promise and kisses,
I thought I could coax you with vows and caresses,
I thought I could coax you ere yellowed the barley,
But you've left me to the new year in sore sorrow fairly.

'Tis delight to the earth when your little feet press it,
'Tis delight to the earth when your sweet singings bless it,
'Tis delight to the earth when you lie, Love, upon it ;
But, oh, his delight who your heart, Love, has won it !

I would wander through the streets hand in hand with my true love ;
I would sail the salt sea with no fortune but you, Love ;
My nearest and dearest I'd leave them for ever,
And you'd call me from death if you said, "We'll ne'er sever."

I gave you my true love, I gave you my whole love ;
On the festival of Mary my poor heart you stole, Love,
With your soft green eyes like dewdrops on corn newly springing,
And the music of your red lips like sweet starlings singing !

THE IRISH WIFE

Thomas D'Arcy Magee

I WOULD not give my Irish wife
  For all the dames of the Saxon land;
I would not give my Irish wife
  For the Queen of France's hand;
For she to me is dearer
  Than castles strong, or lands, or life—
An outlaw, so I'm near her,
  To love till death my Irish wife.

Oh, what would be this home of mine?
  A ruined, hermit-haunted place,
But for the light that still will shine
  Upon its walls from Kathleen's face.
What comfort in a mine of gold?
  What pleasure in a royal life?
If the heart within lay dead and cold,
  If I could not wed my Irish wife.

My Irish wife has clear blue eyes,
  My heaven by day, my stars by night,
And twin-like truth and fondness lie
  Within her swelling bosom white.
My Irish wife has golden hair—
  Apollo's harp had once such strings,
Apollo's self might pause to hear
  Her bird-like carol when she sings.

I would not give my Irish wife
  For all the dames of the Saxon land ;
I would not give my Irish wife
  For the Queen of France's hand.
For she to me is dearer
  Than castles strong, or lands, or life ;
In death I would lie near her,
  And rise beside my Irish wife.

KITTY BHAN

From the Irish. Edward Walsh

BEFORE the sun rose at yester-dawn
I met a fair maid adown the lawn;
The berry and snow to her cheek gave its glow,
And her bosom was fair as the sailing swan.
Then, pulse of my heart! what gloom is thine?

Her beautiful voice more hearts hath won
Than Orpheus' lyre of old hath done;
Her ripe eyes of blue were crystals of dew,
On the grass of the lawn before the sun.
And, pulse of my heart! what gloom is thine?

AN OLD SONG RESUNG

William Butler Yeats

DOWN by the salley gardens my love
and I did meet;
She passed the salley gardens with little
snow-white feet.
She bid me take love easy as the leaves grow
on the tree;
But I, being young and foolish, with her
would not agree.

In a field by the river my love and I did stand,
And on my leaning shoulder she laid her
snow-white hand.
She bid me take life easy as the grass grows
on the weirs;
But I was young and foolish, and now am
full of tears.

NO CHILD

Padraic Colum

I HEARD in the night the pigeons
  Stirring within their nest.
The wild pigeon's stir was tender
  Like a child's hand at the breast.

I cried " O, stir no more !
  (My breast was touched with tears)
O pigeons, make no stir,
  A childless woman hears ! "

AFTER AUGHRIM

Arthur Gerald Geoghegan

DO you remember long ago,
Kathaleen ?
When your lover whispered low,
" Shall I stay or shall I go,
Kathaleen ? "
And you answered proudly, " Go !
And join King James and strike a blow
For the Green ! "

Mavrone, your hair is white as snow,
Kathaleen ;
Your heart is sad and full of woe.
Do you repent you bade him go,
Kathaleen ?
And quick you answer proudly, " No !
Better die with Sarsfield so,
Than live a slave without a blow
For the Green ! "

DIRGE OF RORY O'MORE

Aubrey de Vere

UP the sea-saddened valley at evening's decline,
A heifer walks lowing, the Silk of the Kine;
From the deep to the mountains she roams and again
From the mountain's green urn to the purple-rimmed main.

What seek'st thou, sad mother? Thine own is not thine!
He dropped from the headland; he sank in the brine.
'Twas a dream! but in dreams at thy foot did he follow
Through the meadow-sweet on by the marish and mallow!

Was he thine? Have they slain him? Thou seek'st him, not knowing
Thyself, too, art theirs, thy sweet breath and sad lowing!
Thy gold horn is theirs; thy dark eye and thy silk!
And that which torments thee, thy milk is their milk!

'Twas no dream, Mother Land! 'Tis no dream, Inisfail!
Hope dreams, but grief dreams not—the grief of the Gael!
From Leix and Ikerrin to Donegal's shore
Rolls the dirge of thy last and thy bravest—O'More!

A PEASANT WOMAN'S SONG

Dion Boucicault

I'M very happy where I am,
  Far across the say,
I'm very happy far from home
  In North Amerikay.

It's lonely in the night, when Pat
  Is sleeping by my side,
I lie awake and no one knows
  The big tears that I've cried ;

For a little voice still calls me back
  To my far, far counthrie ;
And nobody can hear it spake,
  Ah ! nobody but me.

There is a little spot of ground
  Behind the chapel wall,
It's nothing but a weeshy mound,
  Without a stone at all ;

It rises like my heart just now,
  It makes a dawny hill ;
It's from below the voice comes out,
  I cannot keep it still.

Oh ! little Voice, ye call me back
To my far, far counthrie,
And nobody can hear ye spake,
Ah, nobody but me !

GIRL OF THE RED MOUTH

Martin MacDermott

GIRL of the red mouth,
Love me ! Love me !
Girl of the red mouth,
Love me !
'Tis by its curve, I know,
Love fashioneth his bow,
And bends it—ah, even so !
Oh, girl of the red mouth, love me !

Girl of the blue eye,
Love me ! Love me !
Girl of the dew eye,
Love me !
Worlds hang for lamps on high ;
And love's world lives in thy
Lustrous and tender eye—
Oh, girl of the blue eye, love me !

Girl of the swan's neck,
Love me ! Love me !
Girl of the swan's neck,
Love me !
As a marble Greek doth grow
To his steed's back of snow,
Thy white neck sits thy shoulder so—
Oh, girl of the swan's neck, love me !

Girl of the low voice,
  Love me ! Love me !
Girl of the sweet voice,
      Love me !
Like the echo of a bell—
Like the bubbling of a well—
Sweeter ! Love within doth dwell—
  Oh, girl of the low voice, love me !

THE WHITE BLOSSOM'S OFF THE BOG

Alfred Perceval Graves

THE white blossom's off the bog and the leaves are off the trees,
And the singing birds have scattered across the stormy seas ;
And oh ! 'tis winter,
Wild, wild winter !
With the lonesome wind sighing for ever through the trees.

How green the leaves were springing ! how glad the birds were singing !
When I rested in the meadow with my head on Patrick's knees ;
And oh ! 'twas springtime,
Sweet, sweet springtime !
With the daisies all dancing before in the breeze.

With the spring the fresh leaves they'll laugh upon the trees,
And the birds they'll flutter back with their songs across the seas,

But I'll never rest again with my head on
Patrick's knees ;
And for me 'twill be winter,
All the year winter,
With the lonesome wind sighing for ever
through the trees.

OUT IN THE DARK

Stephen Lucius Gwynn

OH, up the brae, and up and up, beyont the fairy thorn,
It's there they hae my baby laid that died when he was born.
Afore the priest could christen him to save his soul he died ;
" It never lived at all," they said.—'Twas livin' in my side.

For many a day an' many a night, an' weary night and day,
I kent him livin' at my heart, I carena what they say.
For many a day an' many a night I wearied of unrest,
But now I'm sore to hae my wean back hidden in my breast.

He'll sure be thinkin' long for me an' wearyin' his lone,
Up in thon corner by the whins wi' neither cross nor stone :
Ay, tho' I'd died wi' him itself they wouldna let us be—
The corner o' a field for him, the holy ground for me.

Thare many a wean that lies wi' him, and none that got a name,
Thare many a wife, hard put till it, was glad that dead they came,
Ay, many a man that scarcely minds a child o' his lies there :
But och ! 'tis cruel hard to quit the first you'd ever bear.

The graves are all that tiny that they'd hardly raise a mound,
And couples o' a Sunday do be coortin' on thon ground,
An' there's none that thinks upon them ; but my heart'll be there still,
On the sod among the bracken an' the whins upon the hill.

I'd be feared to come o' night there, for the hill is fairy ground :
But there may be more nor fairies dancin' in the fairy round—
Och, an' if I only thought it, sure I'd let them do their worst,
An' I'd go to see my baby tho' I be to be accursed.

But I'll never reach my wean now, neither here nor in the sod,
An' I'm better wi' the Christians an' the souls that's saved for God—
Och, to feel his fingers on me, an' to clasp him when he smiled !
Sure ye'd think there'd be one heaven for the mother an' the child.

SOGGARTH AROON*

John Banim

AM I the slave they say,
Soggarth aroon?
Since you did show the way,
Soggarth aroon,
Their slave no more to be,
While they would work with me
Ould Ireland's slavery,
Soggarth aroon.

Why not her poorest man,
Soggarth aroon,
Strive to do all he can,
Soggarth aroon,
Her commands to fulfil
Of his own heart and will,
Side by side with you still,
Soggarth aroon?

Loyal and brave to you,
Soggarth aroon,
Yet be no slave to you,
Soggarth aroon.
Nor out of fear to you—
Stand up so near to you—
Och, out of *fear* to you,
Soggarth aroon!

* Priest, dear.

Who in the winter's night,
Soggarth aroon,
When the cold blast did bite,
Soggarth aroon,
Came to my cabin-door,
And, on my earthen floor,
Knelt by me, sick and poor,
Soggarth aroon ?

Who, on the marriage day,
Soggarth aroon,
Made the poor cabin gay,
Soggarth aroon—
And did both laugh and sing,
Making our hearts to ring,
At the poor christening,
Soggarth aroon ?

Who, as friend only met,
Soggarth aroon,
Never did flout me yet,
Soggarth aroon ;
And when my heart was dim,
Gave, while his eye did brim,
What I should give to him,
Soggarth aroon ?

Och, you and only you,
Soggarth aroon !
And for this I was true to you,
Soggarth aroon ;
Our love they'll never shake,
When for ould Ireland's sake
We a true part did take,
Soggarth aroon !

O'HUSSEY'S ODE TO THE MAGUIRE

From the Irish. James Clarence Mangan

WHERE is my Chief, my Master, this bleak night, mavrone !
O, cold, cold, miserably cold is this bleak night for Hugh ;
Its showery, arrowy, speary sleet pierceth one through and through,
Pierceth one to the very bone !

Rolls real thunder ? Or was that red, livid light
Only a meteor ? I scarce know ; but through the midnight dim
The pitiless ice-wind streams. Except the hate that persecutes him
Nothing hath crueller venomy might.

An awful, a tremendous night is this, meseems !
The flood-gates of the rivers of heaven, I think, have been burst wide—
Down from the o'ercharged clouds, like headlong ocean's tide,
Descends grey rain in roaring streams.

Though he were even a wolf ranging the
round green woods,
Though he were even a pleasant salmon
in the unchainable sea,
Though he were a wild mountain eagle,
he could scarce bear, he,
This sharp, sore sleet, these howling floods.

O, mournful is my soul this night for Hugh
Maguire !
Darkly, as in a dream he strays. Before
him and behind
Triumphs the tyrannous anger of the
wounding wind,
The wounding wind, that burns as fire !

It is my bitter grief—it cuts me to the heart—
That in the country of Clan Darry this
should be his fate !
O, woe is me, where is he ? Wandering,
houseless, desolate,
Alone, without or guide or chart !

Medreams I see just now his face, the
strawberry-bright,
Uplifted to the blackened heavens, while
the tempestuous winds

Blow fiercely over and round him, and
the smiting sleet-shower blinds
The hero of Galang to-night !

Large, large affliction unto me and mine it is,
That one of his majestic bearing, his fair,
stately form,
Should thus be tortured and o'erborne—
that this unsparing storm
Should wreak its wrath on head like his !

That his great hand, so oft the avenger of
the oppressed,
Should this chill churlish night, perchance,
be paralysed by frost—
While through some icicle-hung thicket—
as one lorn and lost—
He walks and wanders without rest.

The tempest-driven torrent deluges the
mead ;
It overflows the low banks of the rivulets
and ponds—
The lawns and pasture-grounds lie locked
in icy bonds,
So that the cattle cannot feed.

The pale bright margins of the streams are seen by none ;
Rushes and sweeps along the untamable flood on every side—
It penetrates and fills the cottagers' dwellings far and wide—
Water and land are blent in one.

Through some dark wood, mid bones of monsters, Hugh now strays,
As he confronts the storm with anguished heart, but manly brow—
O, what a sword-wound to that tender heart of his were now
A backward glance at peaceful days !

But other thoughts are his—thoughts that can still inspire
With joy and onward-bounding hope the bosom of Mac-Nee—
Thoughts of his warriors charging like bright billows of the sea,
Borne on the wind's wings, flashing fire !

And though frost glaze to-night the clear dew of his eyes,
And white ice-gauntlets glove his noble fine fair fingers o'er,

A warm dress is to him that lightning-garb
he ever wore,
The lightning of the soul, not skies.

ENVOI

Hugh marched forth to the fight—I grieved
to see him so depart ;
And lo ! to-night he wanders frozen,
rain-drenched, sad, betrayed—
But the memory of the lime-white man-
sions his right hand hath laid
In ashes warms the hero's heart !

THE FAIRY CHILD

Dr. Anster

THE summer sun was sinking
With a mild light, calm and mellow,
It shone on my little boy's bonny cheeks,
And his loose locks of yellow.

The robin was singing sweetly
And his song was sad and tender,
And my little boy's eyes, while he heard the song,
Smiled with a sweet soft splendour.

My little boy lay on my bosom,
His soul the song beguiling,
The joy of his soul had tinged his cheek
And he lay so sweetly smiling.

I sat alone in my cottage
The midnight needle plying,
I feared for the child, for the rush's light
In the socket now was dying.

There came a hand at my lonely latch
Like the wind at midnight moaning ;
I knelt to pray, but rose again,
For I heard my little boy groaning.

I crossed my brow, and I crossed my breast,
  But that night the child departed.
They left a weakling in his stead,
  And I am broken-hearted.

Oh, it cannot be my own sweet boy,
  For his eyes are dim and hollow !
My little boy is gone, is gone,
  And his mother soon will follow.

The dirge for the dead will be sung for me,
  And the mass be chanted meetly,
And I shall sleep with my little boy
  In the moonlit churchyard, sweetly.

SONG OF THE PENAL DAYS

Edward Walsh

YE dark-haired youths and elders hoary,
List to the wandering harper's song.
My cláirseach weeps my true love's story,
In my true love's native tongue :
She's bound and bleeding 'neath the oppressor,
Few her friends and fierce her foe,
And brave hearts cold who would redress her—
Ma chreevin evin alga, O ! *

My love had riches once and beauty,
Till want and sorrow paled her cheek,
And those that owed her love and duty—
Are crouching now like cravens sleek.
O Heaven ! that e'er this day of rigour
Saw sons of heroes abject, low—
And blood and tears thy face disfigure,
Ma chreevin evin alga, O !

I see young virgins step the mountain
As graceful as the bounding fawn,

* My fair, noble maid.

With cheeks like heath-flower by the fountain,
And breasts like downy ceanabhan.*
Shall bondsmen share those beauties ample ?
Shall their pure bosoms' current flow
To nurse new slaves for them that trample ?
Ma chreevin evin alga, O !

Around my cláirseach's speaking measures
Men, like their fathers tall, arise ;
Their heart the same deep hatred treasures—
I read it in their kindling eyes !
The same proud brow to frown at danger—
The same long coolun's graceful flow—
The same dear tongue to curse the stranger—
Ma chreevin evin alga, O !

I'd sing ye more, but age is stealing
Along my pulse and tuneful fires.
Far bolder woke my chord appealing
For craven Sheamus to your sires.
Arouse to vengeance, men of bravery,
For broken oaths—for altars low—
For bonds that bind in bitter slavery—
Ma chreevin evin alga, O !

* The white bog-cotton.

WHEN ROOKS FLY HOMEWARD

Joseph Campbell

WHEN rooks fly homeward
And shadows fall,
When roses fold
On the hay-yard wall,
When blind moths flutter
By door and tree,
Then comes the quiet
Of Christ to me.

When stars look out
On the Children's Path,
And grey mists gather
On carn and rath,
When night is one
With the brooding sea,
Then comes the quiet
Of Christ to me.

KATHALEEN NY-HOULAHAN*

From the Irish. James Clarence Mangan

LONG they pine in weary woe, the nobles of our land;
Long they wander to and fro, proscribed, alas! and banned;
Feastless, houseless, altarless, they bear the exile's brand;
But their hope is in the coming-to of Kathaleen Ny-Houlahan!

Think her not a ghastly hag, too hideous to be seen;
Call her not unseemly names, our matchless Kathaleen;
Young she is and fair she is and would be crownèd queen,
Were the king's son at home again with Kathaleen Ny-Houlahan!

Sweet and mild would look her face, oh none so sweet and mild,
Could she crush the foes by whom her beauty is reviled;

* One of the many emblematic names for Ireland.

Woollen plaids would grace herself and robes of silk her child,
If the king's son were living here with Kathaleen Ny-Houlahan !

Let us pray to Him who holds life's issues in His hands—
Him who formed the mighty globe, with all its thousand lands ;
Girdling them with seas and mountains, rivers deep and strands,
To cast a look of pity upon Kathaleen Ny-Houlahan !

He who over sands and waves led Israel along—
He who fed with heavenly bread that chosen tribe and throng—
He who stood by Moses, when his foes were fierce and strong—
May He show forth His might in saving Kathaleen Ny-Houlahan !

FROM THE COLD SOD THAT'S O'ER YOU

From the Irish. Edward Walsh

FROM the cold sod that's o'er you
I never shall sever ;
Were my hands twined in yours, Love,
I'd hold them for ever.
My fondest, my fairest,
We may now sleep together !
I've the cold earth's damp odour,
And I'm worn from the weather.

This heart filled with fondness
Is wounded and weary ;
A dark gulf beneath it
Yawns jet-black and dreary.
When death comes, a victor,
In mercy to greet me,
On the wings of the whirlwind
In the wild wastes you'll meet me.

When the folk of my household
Suppose I am sleeping,
On your cold grave till morning
The lone watch I'm keeping.

My grief to the night wind
  For the mild maid to render,
Who was my betrothed
  Since infancy tender.

Remember the lone night
  I last spent with you, Love,
Beneath the dark sloe tree
  When the icy wind blew, Love.
High praise to the Saviour
  No sin-stain had found you,
That your virginal glory
  Shines brightly around you.

The priests and the friars
  Are ceaselessly chiding,
That I love a young maiden
  In life not abiding.
O, I'd shelter and shield you
  If wild storms were swelling !
And O, my wrecked hope !
  That the cold earth's your dwelling !

AMONG THE HEATHER

William Allingham

ONE evening walking out I o'ertook a modest colleen,
When the wind was blowing cool and the harvest leaves were falling.
"Is our road, by chance, the same? Might we travel on together?"
"Oh, I keep the mountain-side (she replied) among the heather."

"Your mountain air is sweet when the days are long and sunny,
When the grass grows round the rocks, and the whin-bloom smells like honey;
But the winter's coming fast, with its foggy, snowy weather,
And you'll find it bleak and chill on your hill among the heather."

She praised her mountain home; and I'll praise it too with reason,
For where Molly is there's sunshine and flowers at every season.
Be the moorland black or white does it signify a feather,
Now I know the way by heart, every part, among the heather?

The sun goes down in haste and the night
falls thick and stormy ;
Yet I'd travel twenty miles to the welcome
that's before me ;
Singing hi for Eskydun, in the teeth of wind
and weather !
Love'll warm me as I go through the snow,
among the heather.

I GATHER THREE EARS OF CORN

Joseph Campbell

I GATHER three ears of corn,
And the Black Earl from over the sea
Sails across in his silver ships,
And takes two out of the three.

I might build a house on the hill
And a barn of the speckly stone,
And tell my little stocking of gold,
If the Earl would let me alone.

But he has no thought for me—
Only the thought of his share,
And the softness of the linsey shifts
His lazy daughters wear.

There is a God in Heaven,
And angels, score on score,
Who will not see my hearthstone cold
Because I'm crazed and poor.

My childer have my blood,
And when they get their beards
They will not be content to run
As gillies to their herds !

The day will come, maybe,
When we can have our own,
And the Black Earl will come to us
Begging the bacach's * bone !

* Beggar-man.

THE CUCKOO SINGS IN THE HEART OF WINTER

Nora Chesson

THE cuckoo sings in the heart of winter,
And all for Mauryeen he tunes his song ;
How Mauryeen's hair is the honey's colour.
(He sings of her all the winter long !).

Her long loose hair 's of the honey's colour,
The wild sweet honey that wild bees make ;
The sun herself is ashamed before her,
The moon is pale for her gold cool's sake.

She bound her hair of the honey's colour,
With flowers of yarrow and quicken green,
And now one binds it with leaves of willow,
And cypress lies where my head has been.

Now robins sing beside Pastheen's doorway,
And wrens for bounty that Grania gave :
The cuckoo sings in the heart of winter ;
He sings all day beside Mauryeen's grave.

CREATION

"A. E."

AS one by one the veils took flight,
The day withdrew, the stars came up :
The spirit issued dark and bright,
Filling thy beauty like a cup.

Sacred thy laughter on the air,
Holy thy lightest word that fell,
Proud the innumerable hair
That waved at the enchanter's spell.

Oh Master of the Beautiful,
Creating us from hour to hour,
Give me this vision to the full
To see in lightest things Thy power !

This vision give, no heaven afar,
No throne, and yet I will rejoice,
Knowing beneath my feet a star,
Thy word in every wandering voice.

WHAT TOMAS AN BUILE SAID IN A PUB

James Stephens

I SAW God. Do you doubt it?
  Do you dare to doubt it?
I saw the Almighty Man. His hand
Was resting on a mountain, and
He looked upon the World and all about it:
I saw Him plainer than you see me now,
  You mustn't doubt it.

He was not satisfied;
  His look was all dissatisfied.
His beard swung on a wind far out of sight
Behind the world's curve, and there was light
Most fearful from His forehead, and He sighed,
"That star went always wrong, and from the start
  I was dissatisfied."

He lifted up His hand—
  I say He heaved a dreadful hand
Over the spinning Earth, then I said, "Stay,
You must not strike it, God; I'm in the way:
And I will never move from where I stand."
He said, "Dear child, I feared that you were dead,"
  And stayed His hand.

THE HOST OF THE AIR

William Butler Yeats

O'DRISCOLL drove with a song
The wild duck and the drake
From the tall and the tufted reeds
Of the drear Hart Lake.

And he saw how the reeds grew dark
At the coming of night-tide,
And dreamed of the long dim hair
Of Bridget his bride.

He heard while he sang and dreamed
A piper piping away,
And never was piping so sad,
And never was piping so gay.

And he saw young men and young girls
Who danced on a level place,
And Bridget his bride among them,
With a sad and a gay face.

The dancers crowded about him,
And many a sweet thing said,
And a young man brought him red wine
And a young girl white bread.

But Bridget drew him by the sleeve,
  Away from the merry bands,
To old men playing at cards
  With a twinkling of ancient hands.

The bread and the wine had a doom,
  For these were the host of the air.
He sat and played in a dream
  Of her long dim hair.

He played with the merry old men
  And thought not of evil chance,
Until one bore Bridget his bride
  Away from the merry dance.

He bore her away in his arms,
  The handsomest young man there,
And his neck and his breast and his arms
  Were drowned in her long dim hair.

O'Driscoll scattered the cards
  And out of his dream awoke :
Old men and young men and young girls
  Were gone like a drifting smoke ;

But he heard high up in the air
  A piper piping away,
And never was piping so sad,
  And never was piping so gay.

THE WAKE FEAST

(A Young Girl Dead.) *Alice Milligan*

MAN of the house, soft-hearted with your sorrow,
Woman of the house, with weeping near-hand blind,
Though I spoke ye fair the day and will again the morrow,
It is no good wish for ye I have in my mind.

Young men, talking low on seats beside the doorway,
Old men, drinking quietly on benches next the fire,
Great would be the fear and wonder would come o'er ye
If I stood up among ye now and cried out my desire.

The desire of my heart to you, oh, people, it is cruel,
Since I crossed the threshold where she is lying dead ;
She was my secret love, my hidden, shining jewel,
And I would be glad the day if ye had died instead.

She was my secret love; like a star afar I
saw her,
Or if out of sight, I was hoping for her still,
Looking from the field up the long roadway
for her
Till I saw the walk of her, head-shawled,
down-hill.

Talk then of rain or any change of weather,
Oh, she was quick in passing and I left to
stand,
Being Donal of the Rosses, a boy hired to
labour,
And Sigle the daughter on a farm of land.

Sealed are her lips now, the coffin here to
hold her,
If I ever learn now I have long to wait,
If she ever knew then the love I never told
her
As she went head-shawled, shyly by the gate.

LOST

Moira O'Neill

LISTEN, oh my jewel, I would say,—
  Only wait to' I can get the word:
Sure I thought I had it sweet an' gay
  Like the bravest song o' summer bird.
Faith! I knew it well an' very well
  When this hour the rain begun to fall.
Now the sorra one o' me can tell
  What about it was at all, at all.

Listen, oh my jewel, I was wrong,—
  Never, never lived a word so sad;
Not the heavy sea that drives along
  Bears such weighty throuble as it had.
Och anee! wi' ne'er a voice to cry,
  Like the weary cloud or drownin' moon
So it sank, or so was carried by:
  Never told is all forgot as soon.

FACES OF THE NIGHT

"William Dara"

I SEE them through the night,
Those still, but speaking faces,
Faces full of dreams,
Like lonely forest places,
Fringed with glooming light,
And fraught with hush of leaves and withered streams.

Who look along the night
With such dream-laden eyes,
Eyelids drooped and sad ?
Ah, days that will not rise,
Plumed for no new flight,
Look rather with the eyes that once ye had !

WERE YOU ON THE MOUNTAIN?

From the Irish. Douglas Hyde

O, WERE you on the mountain, or saw you my love?
Or saw you my own one, my queen and my dove?
Or saw you the maiden with the step firm and free?
And say, is she pining in sorrow like me?

I was upon the mountain and saw there your love,
I saw there your own one, your queen and your dove;
I saw there the maiden with the step firm and free,
And she was *not* pining in sorrow like thee.

WHAT THE DEVIL SAID

James Stephens

IT was the night time, God the Father Good,
Weary of praises, on a sudden stood
Up from His throne and leaned upon the sky,
For He had heard a sound, a little cry,
Thin as a whisper climbing up the steep.

And so He looked to where the Earth asleep
Rocked with the moon, He saw the whirling sea
Swing round the world in surgent energy,
Tangling the moonlight in its netted foam,
And nearer saw the white and fretted dome
Of the ice-capped pole spin back a larded ray
To whistling stars, bright as a wizard's day.

But these He passed with eyes intently wide,
Till closer still the mountains He espied
Squatting tremendous on the broad-backed Earth ;
Each nursing twenty rivers at a birth.
And then minutely sought He for the cry
Had climbed the slant of space so hugely high.

He found it in a ditch outside a town,
A tattered, hungry woman crouching down
By a dead Babe—so there was nought to do,
For what is done is done, and back He drew
Sad to His Heaven of ivory and gold ;
And as He sat, all suddenly there rolled
From where the woman wept upon the sod,
Satan's deep voice, " *O thou unhappy God !* "

THE FOLLY OF BEING COMFORTED

William Butler Yeats

ONE that is ever kind said yesterday :
"Your well-belovèd's hair has threads of grey,
And little shadows come about her eyes ;
Time can but make it easier to be wise
Though now it's hard, till trouble is at an end ;
And so be patient, be wise and patient, friend."
But heart, there is no comfort, not a grain,
Time can but make her beauty over again
Because of that great nobleness of hers.
The fire that stirs about her when she stirs
Burns but more clearly. O she had not these ways,
When all the wild summer was in her gaze.
O heart, O heart, if she'd but turn her head,
You'd know the folly of being comforted.

THE WEDDING OF THE CLANS

Aubrey de Vere

I GO to knit two clans together ;
  Our clan and this clan unseen of yore.
Our clan fears nought : but I go, O whither ?
  This day I go from my mother's door.

Thou, redbreast, singest the old song over,
  Though many a time thou hast sung it before :
They never sent thee to some strange new lover :—
  I sing a new song by my mother's door.

I stepped from my little room down by the ladder,
  The ladder that never so shook before ;
I was sad last night ; to-day I am sadder,
  Because I go from my mother's door.

The last snow melts upon bush and bramble ;
  The gold bars shine on the forest's floor ;
Shake not, thou leaf ! it is I must tremble
  Because I go from my mother's door.

From a Spanish sailor a dagger I bought me ;
I trailed a rose-tree our grey bawn o'er ;
The creed and my letters our old bard taught me ;
My days were sweet by my mother's door.

My little white goat that with raised feet huggest
The oak stock, thy horns in the ivies frore,
Could I wrestle like thee—how the wreaths thou tuggest !—
I never would move from my mother's door.

O weep no longer, my nurse and mother !
My foster-sister, weep not so sore !
You cannot come with me, Ir, my brother—
Alone I go from my mother's door.

Farewell, my wolf-hound that slew Mac Owing
As he caught me and far through the thickets bore :
My heifer, Alb, in the green vale lowing,
My cygnet's nest upon Lorna's shore !

He has killed ten chiefs, this chief that plights me,
His hand is like that of the giant Balor ;
But I fear his kiss, and his beard affrights me,
And the great stone dragon above his door.

Had I daughters nine with me they should tarry ;
They should sing old songs ; they should dance at my door ;
They should grind at the quern ;—no need to marry ;
O when will this marriage day be o'er ?

Had I buried, like Moirin, three mates already,
I might say : "Three husbands ! then why not four ? "
But my hand is cold and my foot unsteady,
Because I never was married before !

A NOCTURNE

(*In Memory of Marjorie Arthur.*) *Alice Milligan*

ON a night of sorrow I cried aloud her name.
God, who heard, said, "Hasten," and in my dream she came.
She stood ; I saw her clearly by the moon's white flame ;
Her eyes were sweet as ever ; her voice was yet the same.

No illumining radiance lit her girlish brow—
As in life I loved her I beheld her now ;
I smiled in joy to greet her ; nor did I think it strange
That death had wrought no change.

She bore with her no blossoms unknown to earthly land,
No tall white flowers of paradise, stately and grand ;
There were violets on her breast—blue violets—
And a red rose in her hand.

"How have you gathered?" I asked my gentle one,
"In that unchanging region of never-ceasing sun,
Where the March winds blow never, and no rain-shower ever wets,
Those little violets?"

"I have had them long," she said; "I have loved them much,
They were the last flowers given my living hands to touch,
And in the fevered night of pain before my death,
Sweet was the fragrance of their breath."

"But surely you have gathered in the celestial land
That other flower which lovingly is kept in your hand?
For there is not growing here on the mountain in the snows
Any such crimson rose."

With looks of tenderest reproach my words were met.
"Dear, I have remembered! Dear, can you forget?

Seaward, north of Derry, it fed on sun and dew ;
It was a gift from you."

And I shall always treasure it as priceless in worth,
God has made nothing fairer than the little flowers of earth,
As He has no more to give in His heaven above
Than your own heart's gift of never-changing love.

THE HERMIT

"A. E."

NOW the quietude of earth
Nestles deep my heart within;
Friendships new and strange have birth
Since I left the city's din.

Here the tempest stays its guile,
Like a big kind brother plays,
Romps and pauses here awhile
From its immemorial ways.

Now the silver light of dawn,
Slipping through the leaves that fleck
My one window, hurries on,
Throws its arms around my neck.

Darkness to my doorway hies,
Lays her chin upon the roof,
And her burning seraph eyes
Now no longer keep aloof.

And the ancient mystery
Holds its hands out day by day,
Takes a chair and croons with me
By my cabin built of clay.

When the dusky shadow flits
  By the chimney-nook I see
Where the old enchanter sits,
  Smiles and waves and beckons me.

THE TINKER'S BRAT

James Stephens

I SAW a beggar woman bare
Her bosom to the winter air ;
And into the tender nest
Of her famished mother-breast
She laid her child,
And him beguiled,
With crooning song unto his rest.

With crooning song and tender word,
About a little singing bird,
Who spread her wings about her brood,
And tore her bosom up for food,
And sang the while,
Them to beguile,
All in the forest's solitude.

And hearing this I could not see
That she was clad in misery ;
For in her heart there was a glow
Warmed her bare feet in the snow :
In her heart was hid a sun
Would warm the world for everyone.

THE LITTLE WAVES OF BREFFNY

Eva Gore-Booth

THE grand road from the mountain goes shining to the sea,
And there is traffic on it and many a horse and cart,
But the little roads of Cloonagh are dearer far to me,
And the little roads of Cloonagh go rambling through my heart.

A great storm from the ocean goes shouting o'er the hill,
And there is glory in it and terror on the wind,
But the haunted air of twilight is very strange and still,
And the little winds of twilight are dearer to my mind.

The great waves of the Atlantic sweep storming on their way,
Shining green and silver with the hidden herring shoal,
But the Little Waves of Breffny have drenched my heart in spray,
And the Little Waves of Breffny go stumbling through my soul.

AN OLD WOMAN OF THE ROADS

Padraic Colum

OH, to have a little house,
To own the hearth and stool and all—
The heaped-up sods upon the fire,
The pile of turf against the wall !

To have a clock with weights and chains,
And pendulum swinging up and down !
A dresser filled with shining delph,
Speckled and white and blue and brown !

I could be busy all the day,
Cleaning and sweeping hearth and floor,
And fixing on their shelf again
My white and blue and speckled store.

I could be quiet there at night,
Beside the fire and by myself,
Sure of a bed, and loth to leave
The ticking clock and shining delph.

Och ! but I'm weary of mist and dark,
And roads where there's never a house or bush ;
And I am tired of bog and road,
And the crying wind and the lonesome hush !

And I am praying to God on high,
  And I am praying Him night and day,
For a little house—a house of my own—
  Out of the wind's and the rain's way.

STRINGS IN THE EARTH AND AIR

James Joyce

STRINGS in the earth and air
  Make music sweet;
Strings by the river where
  The willows meet.

There's music along the river,
  For Love wanders there,
Pale flowers on his mantle,
  Dark leaves on his hair.

All softly playing,
  With head to the music bent,
And fingers straying
  Upon an instrument.

THE STRANGER'S GRAVE

Emily Lawless

LITTLE feet too young and soft to walk,
Little lips too young and pure to talk,
Little faded grass-tufts, root and stalk.

I lie alone here, utterly alone,
Amid pure ashes my wild ashes mingle ;
A drownèd man, with a name unknown,
A drifting waif, flung by the drifting shingle.
Oh, plotting brain and restless heart of mine,
What strange fate brought you to so strange
a shrine ?

Sometimes a woman comes across the grass,
Bare-footed, with pit-patterings scarcely
heard,
Sometimes the grazing cattle slowly pass,
Or on my turf sings loud some mating bird.
Oh, plotting brain and restless heart of mine,
What strange fate brought you to so strange
a shrine ?

Little feet too young and soft to walk,
Little lips too young and pure to talk,
Little faded grass-tufts, root and stalk.

THE SILENCE OF UNLABOURED FIELDS

Joseph Campbell

THE silence of unlaboured fields
Lies like a judgment on the air :
A human voice is never heard :
The sighing grass is everywhere—
The sighing grass, the shadowed sky,
The cattle crying wearily.

Where are the lowland people gone ?
Where are the sun-dark faces now ?
The love that kept the quiet hearth,
The strength that held the speeding plough ?
Grasslands and lowing herds are good,
But better human flesh and blood !

THE TWILIGHT PEOPLE

Seumas O'Sullivan

IT is a whisper among the hazel bushes;
It is a long, low, whispering voice that fills
With a sad music the bending and swaying rushes;
It is a heart-beat deep in the quiet hills.

Twilight people, why will you still be crying,
Crying and calling to me out of the trees?
For under the quiet grass the wise are lying,
And all the strong ones are gone over the seas.

And I am old, and in my heart at your calling
Only the old dead dreams a-fluttering go;
As the wind, the forest wind, in its falling
Sets the withered leaves fluttering to and fro.

MAURYA'S SONG

Herbert Trench

RUSHES that grow by the black water
When will I see you more ?
When will the sorrowful heart forget you,
Land of the green, green shore ?
When will the field and the small cabin
See us more
In the old country ?

What is to me all the gold yonder ?
She that bore me is gone,
Knees that dandled and hands that blessed me
Colder than any stone ;
Stranger to me than the face of strangers
Are my own
In the old country.

Vein o' my heart, from the lone mountain
The smoke of the turf will die ;
And the stream that sang to the young childer
Run down alone from the sky :
On the door-stone, grass,—and the cloud lying
Where they lie
In the old country.

THE LOST CHILDREN

Henry de Vere Stacpoole

I PIPE beneath the morning star,
  Across the fields of early frost.
My music leads from near and far
  The footsteps of the children lost.
Beyond the lands by light forlorn
  I bring them to such fields— Ah, well!
For my beloved ye would not mourn
  If they could tell!
    —If they could tell!

"O piper, thou hast led them hence.
  What then? The tale unwritten lies
Of those sweet-hearts of Innocence,
  Their wanderings under alien skies.
Shines there the sun? blows there the wind?
  The butterfly—what share has he?"
Oh, thou wouldst nevermore be blind
  If thou couldst see!
    —If thou couldst see!

THE FLIGHT OF THE WILD GEESE

Dora Sigerson

WRAPT in the darkness of the night,
Gathering in silence on the shore,
Wild Geese flown from hiding on the hills.
(Hark ! the wolf-hound ; thrice he howled before),
Wild geese with forest leaves tangled in their hair.
Is that blood on the heaving breasts of some,
Or dull red clay from fox-deserted lair ?
Why thus so stealthy do they come ?
Wild geese, women's arms round you in the darkness ;
Women's hearts forbid to cry though they break ;
Little children must not sob in their kissing,
" Brother, for ever ? Oh hush thee, for God's sake ! "
Wild geese with fierce eyes, deathless hope in your hearts,
Stretching your strong white wings eager for your flight,
These women's eyes will watch your swift returning.

(Thrice the banshee cried in the stormy night.)

Flinging the salt from their wings and despair from their hearts,
They arise on the breast of the storm with a cry and are gone.
When will you come home, wild geese, with your thousand strong ?
(The wolf-dog loud in the silence of night howls on.)
Not the fierce wind can stay your return nor tumultuous sea—
Nor the freedom France gives to your feet on her luxuriant shore.
No smiles for your love like the tears of your sorrowing land.
Only Death in his reaping could make you return no more.
White birds, white birds, I dream of that glad home-coming ;
Though human eyes could not mark your silent flight,
Women lie face down with clenched hands in the sea.
(Thrice the banshee cries in the stormy night.)

KILLARY

Herbert Trench

I

WHEN all her brothers in the house
Were lying asleep, my love
Ran before me under the bend of boughs
Till we looked down from above
On the long loch,
On the brown loch,
On the lone loch of Killary !

II

Together we ran down the copse
And stood in the rain as close
As the birds that sleep in the soft tops
Of the tree that comes and goes
When the morn moon,
When the young moon,
When the morn moon is on Killary !

III

In tremblings of the water chill
Swans we saw preen their coat,
Biting their plumes with stoop'd bill
And quivering neck, afloat

On the brown shade,
On the deep shade,
The shade of hills on Killary.

IV

"Why pale, my belovèd, now
When the first light 'gins to beat?
No sun of autumn is rich as thou,
And honey after thy feet
Shall rise from the grass,
From the wet of the grass,
The brow of the grass over Killary!

V

"My grief it is only that thou and I
Must part, like swans of the flood
That rise up sorrowful into the sky;
For one goes over the wood,
And one oversea,
And one oversea,
And one oversea from Killary! . . .

VI

"Ah, the little raindrops that hang on the bough,
Together they may run,

But never again shall I and thou
Meet here in the morning sun. . . .
We shall meet no more,
We must kiss no more,
We shall meet no more by Killary! ''

THE POPLARS

Seumas O'Sullivan

AS I went dreaming
By the grey poplar trees,
They bent down and whispered
Words like these.

"In a far country
There is a lonely glen,
Hushed with the footfall
Of shadowy men.

"Shadowy and silent,
And grey amongst the trees,
They have long forgotten
The sound of the breeze.

"And one tall poplar
Grows in that land;
The chain of God's silence,
Held in his hand."

This I heard
As I went dreaming,
By the grey poplars
In the purple evening.

A BROKEN SONG

Moira O'Neill

"WHERE am I from?" From the green hills of Erin.
"Have I no song then?" My songs are all sung.
"What o' my love?" 'Tis alone I am farin'.
Old grows my heart, an' my voice yet is young.

"If she was tall?" Like a king's own daughter.
"If she was fair?" Like a mornin' o' May.
When she'd come laughin' 'twas the runnin' wather,
When she'd come blushin' 'twas the break o' day.

"Where did she dwell?" Where once I had my dwellin'.
"Who loved her best?" There's no one now will know.
"Where is she gone?" Och, why would I be tellin'?
Where she is gone there I can never go.

WHEN I WAS A LITTLE GIRL

Alice Milligan

WHEN I was a little girl,
In a garden playing,
A thing was often said
To chide us delaying :

When after sunny hours,
At twilight's falling,
Down through the garden walks
Came our old nurse calling.

" Come in ! for it's growin' late,
And the grass will wet ye !
Come in ! or when it's dark
The Fenians will get ye."

Then, at this dreadful news,
All helter-skelter,
The panic-struck little flock
Ran home for shelter.

And round the nursery fire
Sat still to listen,
Fifty bare toes on the hearth,
Ten eyes a-glisten,

To hear of a night in March,
And loyal folk waiting
To see a great army of men
Come devastating.

An army of Papists grim,
With a green flag o'er them,
Red-coats and black police
Flying before them.

But God (who our nurse declared
Guards British dominions)
Sent down a deep fall of snow
And scattered the Fenians.

" But somewhere they're lurking yet,
Maybe they're near us."
Four little hearts pit-a-pat
Thought, " Can they hear us ? "

Then the wind-shaken pane
Sounded like drumming ;
" Oh ! " they cried, " tuck us in,
The Fenians are coming ! "

Four little pairs of hands
In the cots where she led those,
Over their frightened heads
Pulled up the bedclothes.

But one little rebel there,
Watching with laughter,
Thought, "When the Fenians come
I'll rise and go after."

Wished she had been a boy
And a good deal older—
Able to walk for miles
With a gun on her shoulder.

Able to lift aloft
That Green Flag o'er them
(Red-coats and black police
Flying before them).

And, as she dropped asleep,
Was wondering whether
God, if they prayed to Him,
Would give fine weather.

THE HERDSMAN

Seumas O'Sullivan

O HERDSMAN, driving your slow twilight flock
By darkening meadow and hedge and grassy rath,
The trees stand shuddering as you pass by ;
The suddenly falling silence is your path.

Over my heart, too, the shadows are creeping,
But on my heart for ever they will lie :
O happy meadows and trees and rath and hedges,
The twilight and all its flock will pass you by.

RECONCILIATION

"A. E."

I BEGIN through the grass once again to be bound to the Lord ;
I can see, through a face that has faded, the face full of rest
Of the earth, of the mother, my heart with her heart in accord ;
As I lie mid the cool green tresses that mantle her breast
I begin with the grass once again to be bound to the Lord.

By the hand of a child I am led to the throne of the King,
For a touch that now fevers me not is forgotten and far,
And His infinite sceptred hands that sway us can bring
Me in dreams from the laugh of a child to the song of a star.
On the laugh of a child I am borne to the joy of the King.

THE LITTLE BLACK ROSE

Aubrey de Vere

THE Little Black Rose shall be red at last;
What made it black but the March wind dry
And the tear of the widow that fell on it fast?
It shall redden the hills when June is nigh.

The Silk of the Kine shall rest at last;
What drave her forth but the dragon-fly?
In the golden vale she shall feed full fast,
With her mild gold horn and her slow, dark eye.

The wounded wood-dove lies dead at last!
The pine long bleeding, it shall not die!
This song is secret. Mine ear it passed
In a wind o'er the plains at Athenry.

FOUR DUCKS ON A POND

William Allingham

FOUR ducks on a pond,
A grass-bank beyond,
A blue sky of spring,
White clouds on the wing :
What a little thing
To remember for years—
To remember with tears !

AGHADOE

John Todhunter

THERE'S a glade in Aghadoe, Aghadoe, Aghadoe,
There's a green and silent glade in Aghadoe,
Where we met, my Love and I, Love's fair planet in the sky
O'er that sweet and silent glade in Aghadoe.

There's a glen in Aghadoe, Aghadoe, Aghadoe,
There's a deep and secret glen in Aghadoe,
Where I hid him from the eyes of the red-coats and their spies
That year the trouble came to Aghadoe.

O ! my curse on one black heart in Aghadoe, Aghadoe,
On Shaun Dhuv, my mother's son in Aghadoe,
When your throat fries in Hell's drouth salt the flame be in your mouth,
For the treachery you did in Aghadoe !

For they tracked me to that glen in Aghadoe, Aghadoe,
When the price was on his head in Aghadoe ;

O'er the mountain, through the wood, as I stole to him with food,
When in hiding lone he lay in Aghadoe.

But they never took him living in Aghadoe, Aghadoe.
With the bullets in his heart in Aghadoe,
There he lay, the head—my breast keeps the warmth where once 'twould rest—
Gone to win the traitor's gold from Aghadoe!

I walked to Mallow Town from Aghadoe, Aghadoe,
Brought his head from the gaol's gate to Aghadoe;
Then I covered him with fern and I piled on him the cairn,
Like an Irish king he sleeps in Aghadoe.

O! to creep into that cairn in Aghadoe, Aghadoe!
There to rest upon his breast in Aghadoe!
Sure your dog for you could die with no truer heart than I,
Your own love, cold on your cairn in Aghadoe.

TO MORFYDD

Lionel Johnson

A VOICE on the winds,
A voice on the waters,
Wanders and cries :

O ! what are the winds ?
And what are the waters ?
Mine are your eyes.

Western the winds are,
And western the waters,
Where the light lies :

O ! what are the winds ?
And what are the waters ?
Mine are your eyes.

Cold, cold, grow the winds,
And dark are the waters ?
Where the sun dies :

O ! what are the winds ?
And what are the waters ?
Mine are your eyes.

And down the night winds,
And down the night waters
The music flies :

O ! what are the winds ?
And what are the waters ?
Cold be the winds,
And wild be the waters,
So mine be your eyes.

THE LOVER AND BIRDS

William Allingham

WITHIN a budding grove,
In April's ear sang every bird his best,
But not a song to pleasure my unrest
Or touch the tears unwept of bitter love;
Some spake methought with pity, some as if in jest.
To every word
Of every bird
I listened, or replied as it behove.

Screamed Chaffinch, "Sweet, sweet, sweet!
Pretty lovey, come and meet me here!"
"Chaffinch," quoth I, "be dumb awhile, in fear
Thy darling prove no better than a cheat,
And never come, or fly when wintry days appear."
Yet from a twig,
With voice so big,
The little fowl his utterance did repeat.

Then I, " The man forlorn
Hears Earth send up a foolish noise aloft."
" And what'll *he* do ? What'll *he* do ? " scoffed
The Blackbird, standing in an ancient thorn,
Then spread his sooty wings and flitted to the croft,
With cackling laugh ;
Whom I, being half
Enraged, called after, giving back his scorn.

Worse mocked the Thrush, " Die ! die !
O, could he do it ? could he do it ? Nay !
Be quick ! be quick ! Here, here, here ! " (went his lay).
" Take heed ! take heed ! " then, " Why ? why ? why ? why ? why ?
See-ee now ! see-ee now ! " (he drawled)
" Back ! back ! back ! R-r-r-run away ! "
O Thrush, be still !
Or at thy will
Seek some less sad interpreter than I.

" Air, air ! blue air and white !
Whither I flee, whither, O whither, O whither I flee ! "
(Thus the Lark hurried, mounting from the lea)
" Hills, countries, many waters glittering bright
Whither I see, whither I see ! deeper, deeper, deeper, whither I see, see, see ! "
" Gay Lark," I said,
" The song that's bred
In happy nest may well to heaven take flight.'

" There's something, something sad,
I half remember "—piped a broken strain.
Well sung, sweet Robin ! Robin sung again.
" Spring's opening cheerily, cheerily ! be we glad ! "
Which moved, I wist not why, me melancholy mad,
Till now, grown meek,
With wetted cheek,
Most comforting and gentle thoughts I had.

THE CONNAUGHTMAN RETURNING

Nora Chesson

THERE'S a grey fog over Dublin of the curses,
It blinds my eyes, mavrone, and stops my breath ;
And I travel slow that once could run the swiftest,
And I fear ere I meet Mauryeen I'll meet Death.

There's a grey fog over Dublin of the curses,
And a grey fog dogs my footsteps as they go,
And it's long and sore to tread, the road to Connaught.
Is it fault of brogues or feet I fare so slow ?

There's a grey fog over Dublin of the curses,
But the Connaught wind will blow it from my way,
And a Connaught girl will kiss it from my memory,
If the Death that walks beside me will delay.

(There's a grey fog over Dublin of the curses,
And no wind comes to break its stillness deep ;
And a Connaughtman lies on the road to Connaught,
And Mauryeen will not kiss him from his sleep—Ululu !)

A CRADLE SONG

Padraic Colum

O MEN from the fields !
  Come softly within.
Tread softly, softly,
  O men coming in !

Mavourneen is going
  From me and from you,
Where Mary will fold him
  With mantle of blue.

From reek of the smoke
  And cold of the floor,
And the peering of things
  Across the half-door.

O men from the fields !
  Soft, softly come thro'.
Mary puts round him
  Her mantle of blue.

FONTENOY, 1745

The Hon. Emily Lawless

I. BEFORE THE BATTLE

OH bad the march, the weary march, beneath these alien skies !—
But good the night, the friendly night, that soothes our tired eyes.
And bad the war, the tedious war that keeps us sweltering here,
But good the hour, the friendly hour, that brings the battle near ;
That brings us on to battle, that summons to their share
The homeless troops, the banished men, the exiled sons of Clare.

Oh little Corca Bascinn, the wild, the bleak, the fair !
Oh little stony pastures whose flowers are sweet, if rare !
Oh rough and rude Atlantic, the thunderous, the wide,
Whose kiss is like a soldier's kiss which will not be denied !

The whole night long we dream of you, and waking think we're there,
Vain dream, and foolish waking, we never shall see Clare.

The wind is wild to-night, there's battle in the air ;
The wind is from the West and it seems to blow from Clare.
Have you nothing, nothing for us, loud brawler of the night ?
In this hollow, star-pricked darkness as in the sun's hot glare,
In sun-tide, moon-tide, star-tide, we thirst, we starve for Clare !

Hark ! yonder through the darkness one distant rat-tat-tat !
The old foe stirs out there, God bless his soul for that !
The old foe musters strongly, he's coming on at last,
And Clare's Brigade may claim its own wherever blows fall fast.
Send us, ye western breezes, our full, our rightful share
For Faith, and Fame, and Honour, and the ruined hearths of Clare.

II. AFTER THE BATTLE

"MARY mother, shield us! Say, what men are ye,
Sweeping past so swiftly on this morning sea?"
"Without sails or rowlocks merrily we glide
Home to Corca Bascinn on the brimming tide."

"Jesus save you, gentry! why are ye so white,
Sitting all so straight and still in this misty light?"
"Nothing ails us, brother; joyous souls are we
Sailing home together on the morning sea.

"Cousins, friends, and kinsfolk, children of the land,
Here we come together, a merry, rousing band;
Sailing home together from the last great fight,
Home to Clare from Fontenoy in the morning light.

"Men of Corca Bascinn, men of Clare's Brigade,
Hearken, stony hills of Clare, hear the charge we made;
See us come together, singing from the fight,
Home to Corca Bascinn in the morning light."

AS I CAME OVER THE GREY, GREY HILLS

Joseph Campbell

AS I came over the grey, grey hills
And over the grey, grey water,
I saw the gilly leading on,
And the white Christ following after.

Where and where does the gilly lead ?
And where is the white Christ faring ?
They've travelled the four grey sounds of Orc,
And the four grey seas of Eirinn.

The moon is set and the wind's away,
And the song in the grass is dying,
And a silver cloud on the silent sea
Like a shrouding-sheet is lying.

But Christ and the gilly will follow on
Till the ring in the east is showing,
And the awny corn is red on the hills,
And the golden light is glowing !

THE SEDGES

Seumas O'Sullivan

I WHISPERED my great sorrow
  To every listening sedge;
And they bent, bowed with my sorrow,
  Down to the water's edge.

But she stands and laughs lightly
  To see me sorrow so,
Like the light winds that laughing
  Across the water go.

If I could tell the bright ones
  That quiet-hearted move,
They would bend down like the sedges
  With the sorrow of love.

But she stands laughing lightly,
  Who all my sorrow knows,
Like the little wind that laughing
  Across the water blows.

THE HAPPY TOWNLAND

William Butler Yeats

THERE'S many a strong farmer
  Whose heart would break in two,
If he could see the townland
  That we are riding to ;
Boughs have their fruit and blossom
  At all times of the year ;
Rivers are running over
  With red beer and brown beer.
An old man plays the bagpipes
  In a golden and silver wood ;
Queens, their eyes blue like the ice,
  Are dancing in a crowd.

The little fox he murmured,
  " O what of the world's bane ? "
The sun was laughing sweetly,
  The moon plucked at my rein ;
But the little red fox murmured,
  " O do not pluck at his rein,
He is riding to the townland
  That is the world's bane."

When their hearts are so high
  That they would come to blows,
They unhook their heavy swords
  From golden and silver boughs ;

But all that are killed in battle
  Awaken to life again :
It is lucky that their story
  Is not known among men.
For O, the strong farmers
  That would let the spade lie,
Their hearts would be like a cup
  That somebody had drunk dry.

The little fox he murmured,
  " O what of the world's bane ? "
The sun was laughing sweetly,
  The moon plucked at my rein ;
But the little fox he murmured,
  " O do not pluck at his rein,
He is riding to the townland
  That is the world's bane."

IRISH COUNTRY SONG

Padraic Colum

MY young love said to me, "My parents won't mind,
And my brothers won't slight you for your lack of kind."
Then she stepped away from me, and this she did say,
"It will not be long, love, till our marriage day."

She went away from me, and she moved through the fair,
And fondly I watched her go here and go there:
Then she went her way homeward, with one star awake,
As the swan in the evening moves over the lake.

The people were saying no two were e'er wed
But one had a sorrow that never was said;
And I smiled as she passed with her goods and her gear,
And that was the last that I saw of my dear.

I dreamt it last night that my young love
came in,
So softly she entered her feet made no din.
She came close beside me, and this she did
say,
"It will not be long, love, till our marriage
day."

THE LITTLE VOICES

Nancy Campbell

THE little voices of poor things are crying in my heart,
And I must follow where they cry, and learn what they impart,—
The little fire upon the hearth, the water in the jug,
The vessel made of earthenware, the sweet roots newly dug ;
The green things growing in the fields, and all the gentle flowers,
The leaves upon the lovely trees, the wandering winds and showers ;
The dumb deep clay that holds the seed, the spaces of the sky,
The beasts that have such sad wild eyes, the birds that nest and fly.
God once came down to be a child upon His Mother's knee,
For often touching lowly things you touch a Mystery.

THE ROAD TO BETHLEHEM

Nancy Campbell

MARY :

WHERE will my little lamb be laid
When he shall come to me?

JOSEPH :

God has some royal pavilion made
To welcome him and thee.

MARY :

I have a strange thought in my head,
(So dark and cold 's the way)
Maybe in some poor lowly shed
My little lamb I'll lay.

JOSEPH :

Not so : he is the conqueror,
To take King David's crown ;
And many a heavenly messenger
Shall herald his renown.

MARY :

Already is the angelic crowd
Awakening in the sky,
But still on nothing fine or proud
God's Son and mine shall lie.

And though he comes a-conquering,
Salvation to impart,
First he will be a little thing
That cries upon my heart.

JUNE

James Stephens

I CLING and swing
On a branch or sing
Through the cool, clear hush of morning-O :
Or fling my wing
On the air and bring
To sleepier birds a warning-O ;
That the night's in flight
And the sun's in sight
And the dew is the grass adorning-O—
And the green leaves swing
As I sing, sing, sing
Up by the river
Down by the dell,
To the little, wee nest
Where the big tree fell
So early in the morning-O.

I flit and twit
In the sun for a bit
When his light so bright is shining-O :
Or sit and fit
My plumes or knit
Straw plaits for the nest's nice lining-O :
And she with glee
Shows glad to me

Under soft wings reclining-O :
And I sing that Peg
Has an egg, egg, egg :
Up by the oat field,
Round the mill,
Past the meadow
Down the hill,
So early in the morning-O.

I stoop and swoop
On the air, or loop
Through the trees, and then go soaring-O
To groop with a troop
On the gusty poop
While the wind behind is roaring-O :
I skim and swim
To a cloud's red rim
And up to the azure flooring-O :
And my wide wings drip
As I slip, slip, slip
Down through the rain-drops
Back where Peg
Broods in the nest
On the little white egg,
So early in the morning-O.

IRISH SKIES

Winifred M. Letts

IN London here the streets are grey, an' grey the skies above,
I wish I were in Ireland to see the skies I love,—
Pearl cloud, buff cloud, the colour of a dove.

All day I travel English streets, but in my dreams I tread
The far Glencullen road and see the soft sky overhead,—
Grey clouds, white clouds, the wind has shepherded.

At night the London lamps shine bright, but what are they to me ?
I've seen the moonlight in Glendhu, the stars above Glenchree,—
The lamps of Heaven give light enough for me.

The city in the winter-time puts on a shroud of smoke,
But the sky above Tibradden was blue as Mary's cloak—
Ruffled like doves' wings when the wind awoke.

I dream I see the Wicklow hills by evening
sunlight kissed,
And every glen and valley there brimful of
radiant mist,—
The jewelled sky topaz and amethyst.

I wake to see the London streets, the sombre
sky above ;
God's blessing on the far-off roads and on
the skies I love—
Pearl feather, grey feather, wings of a dove.

THE OTHERS

Seumas O'Sullivan

FROM our hidden places
By a secret path,
We come in the moonlight
To the side of the green rath ;

There the night through
We take our pleasure
Dancing to such a measure
As earth never knew.

To dance and lilt
And song without a name
So sweetly chanted
'Twould put a bird to shame,

And many a maiden
Is there of mortal birth,
Her young eyes laden
With dreams of earth.

Music so piercing wild
And forest-sweet would bring
Silence on blackbirds singing
Their best in the ear of spring.

And many a youth entrancèd
Moves slow in the dreamy round,
His brave lost feet enchanted
With the rhythm of faery sound.

O many a thrush and blackbird
Would fall to the dewy ground
And pine away in silence
For envy of such a sound ;

So the night through,
In our sad pleasure,
We dance to many a measure
That earth never knew.

THE FULLNESS OF TIME

James Stephens

ON a rusty iron throne
Past the furthest star of space
I saw Satan sit alone,
Old and haggard was his face ;
For his work was done and he
Rested in eternity.

And to him from out the sun
Came his Father and his Friend
Saying, Now the work is done
Enmity is at an end :
And He guided Satan to
Paradises that He knew.

Gabriel without a frown,
Uriel without a spear ;
Raphael came singing down
Welcoming their ancient peer,
And they seated him beside
One who had been crucified.

AT THAT HOUR

James Joyce

AT that hour when all things have repose,
O lonely watcher of the skies,
Do you hear the night-wind and the sighs
Of harps playing unto Love to unclose
The pale gates of sunrise ?

When all things repose do you alone
Awake to hear the sweet harps play
To Love before him on his way,
And the night wind answering in antiphon
Till night is overgone ?

Play on, invisible harps, unto Love,
Whose way in heaven is aglow
At that hour when soft lights come and go,
Soft sweet music in the air above
And in the earth below.

I HEAR AN ARMY

James Joyce

I HEAR an army charging upon the land,
And the thunder of horses plunging; foam about their knees:
Arrogant, in black armour, behind them stand,
Disdaining the reins, with fluttering whips, the Charioteers.

They cry into the night their battle name:
I moan in sleep when I hear afar their whirling laughter.
They cleave the gloom of dreams, a blinding flame,
Clanging, clanging upon the heart as upon an anvil.

They come shaking in triumph their long grey hair:
They come out of the sea and run shouting by the shore.
My heart, have you no wisdom thus to despair?
My love, my love, my love, why have you left me alone?

VERSES FOR MUSIC

John Todhunter

OH come to me in the morning, white swan of the thousand charms,
Or come to me in the passion of day, the rapture of noon,
Or come to me in the twilight hour, sweet longing of my arms,
In the hush when Day kisses Night, our two hearts beating in tune.

The owl-soft wings of Time bring parting of our feet ;
But never my heart from yours will sunder, come day or night ;
And never my lips forget your lips, that the world made sweet,
Or my heart the song of its love in that hour of its young delight.

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